



FACT SHEET

Long-Term Living Initiatives

Supporting a Long-Term Living Agenda

The Administration on Aging (AoA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), serves as the Federal focal point and advocacy agency for older people and their concerns. AoA has implemented a number of new initiatives, partnerships, and grant programs that provide the foundation for a long-term living agenda. Our goal for this agenda is to support better planning, better home and community-based long-term care options, and more flexible and consumer-friendly systems that allow older Americans to remain vibrant and independent. This is an important part of the general movement in our country toward more consumer choice and consumer control.

Studies have shown that given the choice, older adults will remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. AoA is proud to sponsor programs that help them do exactly that. Using the best science and technology available, as well as the indispensable element of human caring, AoA is implementing programs and activities that help older persons eat better and stay active, that highlight the positive benefits of choice, and that redefine aging in our society.

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

According to a 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chronic diseases account for 7 of every 10 deaths in the U.S., and generate more than 75 percent of all medical expenditures. Much of the total burden of chronic disease is preventable, because many chronic health problems are directly related to individual choices and behaviors.

People who adopt healthy habits and avoid high-risk behaviors can expect to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. By contrast, physical inactivity, smoking, unhealthy eating, and other harmful lifestyle choices contribute to obesity, cancer, cardiovascular problems, diabetes, and other major causes of death and disease. Living well not only costs little and saves the healthcare system a lot, but also promotes better mental health and happiness. These major benefits are the reason why AoA is leading a national campaign to promote healthy lifestyles and behavior choices among older people. AoA also supports important projects that increase access for older people to programs that have been proven effective in reducing the risk of injury, disability, and death. The following programs exemplify key initiatives currently underway at AoA.



You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging Campaign

The *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign aims to boost physical activity and improve food choices among older Americans. *You Can!* is based on growing evidence that even modest improvements in diet and activity can promote healthy aging. The campaign is part of AoA's prevention strategy to increase the number of older Americans who are active and healthy. The campaign builds on the local experience and commitment of community organizations in every state. AoA is well on its way to enrolling at least 2,000 community organizations to reach at least two million older Americans in two years. Federal partners include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute on Aging, and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Older adults can reap numerous rewards by making wise food choices and being more physically active. Older adults tend to be healthier, feel better, and maintain their mobility and independence longer when they take these simple steps. The campaign provides local partners with ready-to-use materials to educate older adults and their caregivers about the benefits of nutrition and physical activity, and provides a range of safe activities to motivate them and get them started. The campaign also offers community organizations numerous opportunities to be recognized and participate in the campaign.

To support the *You Can!* Campaign, AoA developed a comprehensive toolkit and Web site (www.aoa.gov/youcan/). The toolkit offers educational content and turnkey press materials to help partners publicize the campaign and recruit participants, including a step-by-step publicity guide, letterhead, and ready-to-print logos. It also contains a guidebook with week-by-week activities for participants, and a variety of motivational tools and incentives including certificates and a logbook to chart suggested activities.

Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Grants Program

AoA launched the Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Grants Program, a public/private partnership to implement activities that research has proven effective in reducing the risk of disease, disability, and injury. The partnership involves a variety of Federal agencies and private foundations that coordinate and extend the support of evidence-based prevention programs in communities across the country. These programs are implemented through aging services provider organizations, including senior centers, nutrition programs, and senior housing projects. Generous support is provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and the Horizon Foundation.

AoA is funding 13 local projects and a National Resource Center on Prevention at the National Council on the Aging (NCOA). The grants program will demonstrate how the results of research from NIA, CDC, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and other organizations can be effectively translated into practice at the community level through aging service provider organizations.

Local projects supported by grants focus on interventions in:

- Disease self-management
- Fall prevention
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Medication management

Each project involves a partnership with local aging service providers, Area Agencies on Aging, healthcare providers, and a research organization.

Improving Access and Choice

According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau projections, the number of people in our population who are 65 and older will double by 2030, reaching about 70 million. The number of oldest individuals, 85 and above, will also nearly double to about 8.5 million. Given these projected demographic changes, it is essential that our nation learn about long-term care options, understand the relative costs and benefits of various approaches, and begin planning now for future needs. It is also important for policymakers to explore new and innovative approaches to the delivery and funding of home-and community-based long-term care services.

AoA has been aggressive in promoting and testing innovative approaches to providing information and assistance, and in supporting the coordination and expansion of choice in long-term care.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

The Aging and Disability Resource Center Initiative represents a collaborative effort between AoA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The initiative's goal is to enable and empower individuals to make informed choices, and to streamline access to long-term care services through the development of "one-stop" programs at the community level. These Centers serve as a single point of entry to long-term service and support systems. Aging and Disability Resource Centers provide information and assistance to individuals in both the public and private system. They are required to target their services to older persons and individuals with disabilities.

Community-based services provided by Aging and Disability Resource Centers include:

- Public education
- Information and counseling on available options
- Access to public programs, including Medicaid nursing facility care and waiver services
- Coordination with other programs (e.g., disease prevention, nutrition, transportation, housing)
- Prospective planning to help individuals anticipate and prepare for their long-term service and support needs

To date, AoA and CMS have awarded grants to state agencies in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, the Northern Mariana Islands, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Cash and Counseling

AoA partnered with its HHS sister agency, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fund 11 Cash and Counseling grants. Cash and Counseling programs allow eligible individuals to determine their personal assistance needs, direct their own care, and live more independently as they receive supportive services from Medicaid. The original demonstration of the Cash and Counseling model showed that when participants were allowed to self-direct, quality of life improved, satisfaction with services increased, unmet needs for care decreased, access to home care increased, and nursing home usage decreased.

AoA views the Cash and Counseling effort as a significant opportunity to expand consumer-directed care to more older adults across the country. This program represents a substantial step toward implementing consumer-directed options in Medicaid as well as other long-term care programs administered by the Aging Network.

Integrated Care Management

As new options for older people emerge in health and long-term care, managed care plays an increasingly important role. Recognizing this, AoA introduced a new grant program to identify and support innovations in aging services that involve partnerships with managed care organizations and/or financing arrangements that improve the quality of

care for older people. This program is part of AoA's strategic effort to strengthen the role of community-based aging services in promoting a more balanced and integrated system of health and long-term care for older people.

Fourteen projects have been funded. These include:

- Promising practices that will identify and document successful models and approaches that can be replicated in other communities
- Program enhancements that build on existing partnerships or approaches already in place
- New models that support the design and/or implementation of novel approaches in managed care

A broad mix of partnerships among community organizations, Area Agencies on Aging, managed care organizations, and universities are represented in the program.

Transportation Coordination

President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order calling for action to enhance access to transportation and thereby improve mobility, job opportunities, and access to services for people who are transit-dependent. AoA supports the Presidential Executive Order on Human Services Transportation Coordination through a partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the *United We Ride* initiative. AoA and FTA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to assist their respective networks in coordinating transportation services for older adults. The MOU focuses specifically on helping States and communities assess their level of coordination and develop action plans to move forward cooperatively. Together, AoA and FTA issued a road map for coordinated planning across programs, and provided up-to-date research to inform program development.

The five-part *United We Ride* initiative encourages government agencies and nonprofit organizations to collaborate in transportation planning and to share resources to provide the best service for customers. The initiative includes:

- **Framework for Action**, a tool to help states and communities assess where they are and determine what needs to happen. The Framework provides a starting point for groups at all levels to begin the dialog needed to improve coordinated services. Within this Framework, needs are identified and an action plan for implementation can be developed.
- **State Leadership Awards**, to recognize states for their leadership in building and implementing infrastructures, policies, and programs that facilitate human service transportation coordination.
- **National Leadership Forum**, a jointly-sponsored forum for governor-appointed senior leadership teams to identify technical assistance needs and develop state action plans that improve human service transportation.
- **State Coordination Grants**, designed to help address the needs and gaps related to human service transportation. Forty-five states will receive United We Ride State Coordination grants in 2005.
- **Help Along the Way**, a technical assistance program providing hands-on assistance to states and communities in developing and delivering coordinated human service transportation programs. Six United We Ride regional leadership meetings were held in 2004.

AoA seeks to improve the quality of life for all older Americans by supporting their well-being and helping them to remain independent. At the same time, AoA is exploring ways to prepare for the aging of America in the foreseeable future.

As the Nation celebrates Older Americans Month in May, you can learn more about long-term living initiatives and other programs by visiting www.aoa.gov. The theme of Older Americans Month—"Celebrate Long-Term Living!"—highlights the goal of organizations throughout the Aging Network to help older Americans stay healthy and active longer. For information about local resources, contact the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit www.eldercare.gov.